

recently 'given a pitiable exhibition of covetousness-

The question was only whether he had erred through

ignorance or carelessness, or whether he had acted

"against his conscience or the very light of nature"—

whether, in short, his sin was accidental or a trade.

In the end he escaped with his fine and admonition*⁸¹

If the only Christian documents which survived were

the New Testament and the records of the Calvinist

Churches in the age of the Reformation, to suggest a

connection between them more intimate than a coinci-

dence of phraseology would appear, in all probability,

a daring extravagance. Legalistic, mechanical, with-

out imagination or compassion, the work of a jurist

and organizer of genius, Calvin's system was more

Roman than Christian, and more Jewish than either*

That it should be as much more tyrannical than the

mediaeval Church, as the Jacobin Club was than the

ancien regime, was inevitable. Its meshes were finer,

its zeal and its efficiency greater. And its enemies

were not merely actions and writings, but thoughts.

The tyranny with which it is reproached by posterity

would have been regarded by its champions as a com-

pliment. In the struggle between liberty and authority, ••

Calvinism sacrificed liberty, not with reluctance, but

with enthusiasm. For the Calvinist Church was an

army marching back to Canaan, under

orders delivered once for all from Sinai, and the aim of its leaders was the conquest of the Promised Land, not the consolation of stragglers or the encouragement of laggards. In war the classical expedient is a dictatorship. The dictatorship of the ministry appeared as inevitable to the whole-hearted Calvinist, as the Committee of Public Safety to the men of 1793, or the dictatorship of the proletariat to an enthusiastic Bolshevik. If it reached its zenith where Calvin's discipline was accepted without Calvin's culture and intellectual range, in the orgies of devil worship with which a Cotton and an Endicott shocked at last even

10